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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

9 m 34th
p.1 Monday, October 25, 1943

HOMEWORK ON HALF-TIME. Information from Extension Service home management specialists of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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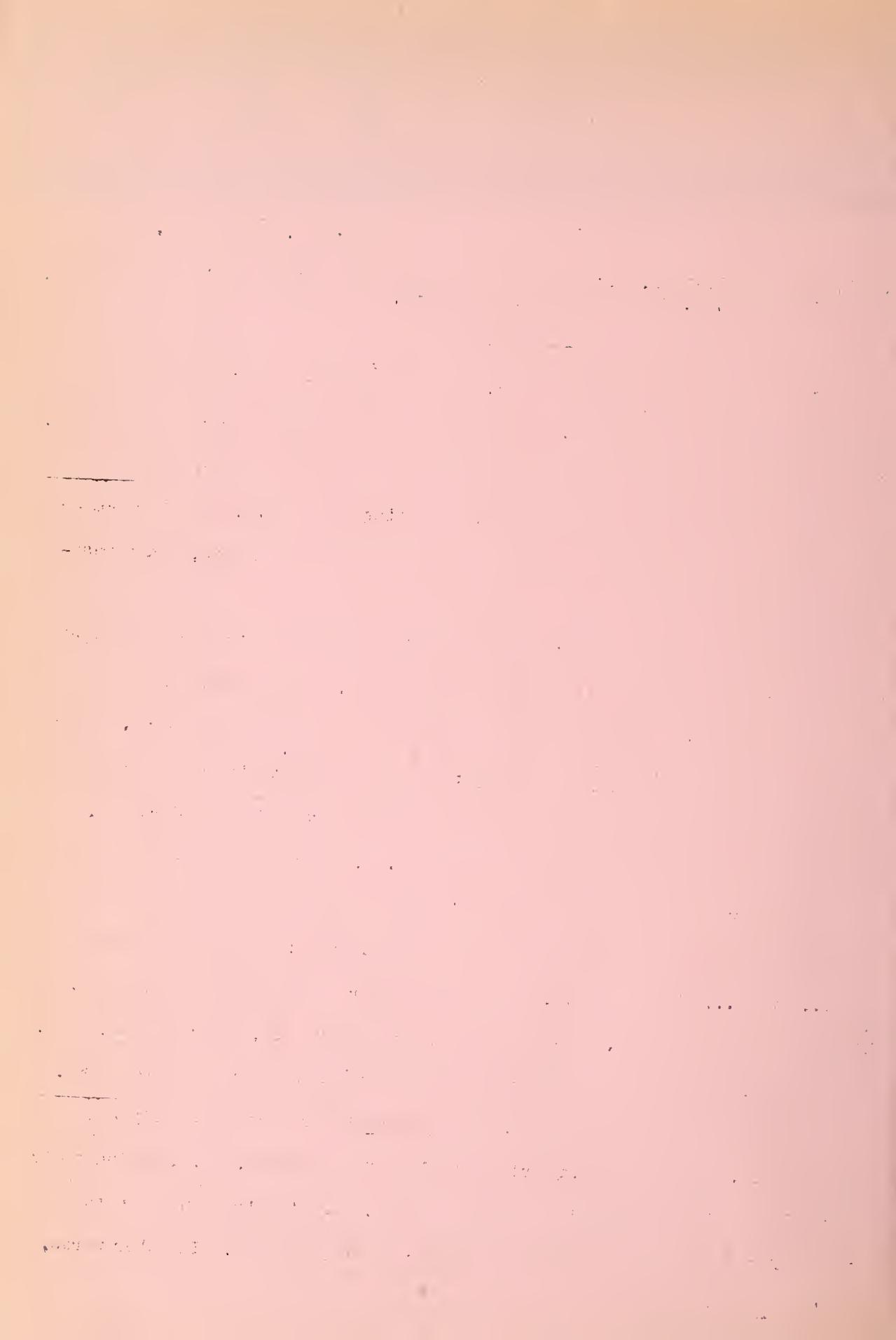
With everyone working extra hard, 24 hours just don't make as long a day as they did before the war. And this is true especially for the homemaker.

When she gets back from her job in a war plant or office or comes in from doing farm chores, her home work is still waiting for her...and other members of the family are depending on her for good meals, clean clothes, and a restful, comfortable home.

It's no easy matter to carry two full-time jobs. So if you're a two-job woman, gear your home work to a half-time schedule. War administrators allocate the strategic materials of war where they'll do the most good. Your strategic materials are time and energy: allocate them to the essential jobs in your home, and put non-essential jobs in cold storage for the duration.

The home management specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture are studying wartime problems, and they've found that in spite of extra work outside the home, women are doing more home production: canning and drying food...sewing...making bread...repairing furniture and household equipment. With their menfolks gone, women are doing more heavy work, and handy-man jobs.

But many homemakers are refusing to let these extra jobs get them down. They've adjusted to wartime demands by planning their work on a daily and weekly basis. They're cutting out the frills of homemaking, and devoting their energy to the jobs that really need to be done. And they're always on the lookout for faster, simpler ways of getting those jobs done. In other words, they're motion-minded.



One Indiana farm woman decided she'd have to give her husband more help with the farm work after their hired man went into the army. That meant cutting down on housekeeping time. Here are a few of the time-savers she figured out: She stopped ironing sheets, towels, overalls, and pajamas--just folded them as they came off the line. She has her three children wear knitted underwear so it won't need ironing. She fixed up a washroom in the basement where the family can clean up for meals and hang up soiled work clothes. And she rearranged her kitchen to cut out many steps in meal preparation, and the new arrangement saves her back, too, because it's eliminated a lot of stooping.

Other "motion-minded" housewives have discovered similar time-savers: working each day according to a planned schedule...baking in glass or pottery dishes to save extra serving dishes...Using long sheets so beds are easier to make...putting up low hooks so the children can hang up their own clothes...washing dishes only once or twice a day, and scalding them instead of wiping them...using table mats that can be wiped clean with a damp cloth.

These are only a few of the ideas women have found helpful. You can work out many shortcuts of your own. Be critical of the way you work...the old way of doing a job isn't necessarily the best. Just by being critical of old methods, home management specialists at Cornell University cut the ironing time for a shirt from 17 minutes to 7 minutes.

Work centers, where you keep all the tools needed for a certain job, are time and energy savers. One homemaker lopped many minutes of her morning schedule by grouping all the breakfast things on one shelf--coffee, coffeepot, toaster, cereal, and so on. Other work centers in the kitchen are handy for packing lunches...washing dishes...preparing vegetables...and baking. A central hall closet is a good place to group housecleaning supplies...and a second set of housecleaning tools on the second floor saves many trips up and down stairs.



An important factor in the amount of work you do is the way you make use of your body. Good posture saves back strain, and conserves energy for the job. Don't be afraid of pampering yourself a little while you're working.

Sit down whenever the job permits, and give yourself frequent rest periods when you can lie down for a few minutes and relax with a magazine.

But no matter how well you organize and do your housework, unless you're a superwoman you'll need the cooperation of your family. Hold a family conference to decide what jobs are important, and who's going to do them. At first it may seem easier to do things yourself, rather than train the children. But if you have patience to teach the children, you'll gain in the end--and of course the training will be good for the youngsters too. Children can do many little things that lighten the general housekeeping load: making beds, putting away toys and reading matter, leaving their own rooms and the bathroom neat. Farm children bring in wood and gather eggs. Both farm and city children can sweep and help with cooking, mending, and laundry.

A family bulletin board made of wall board or wood, and hung in the kitchen, helps keep the family work schedule up to date. Post the jobs for the week...and let everyone in the family use the bulletin board to suggest ideas for meals, work, or recreation.

Cooperation outside the home can simplify housekeeping, too. Families can share equipment for sewing, canning and laundry...they can help each other with big jobs, such as painting and butchering...care for children on a cooperative basis...and take turns driving to market, school, and church.

A homemaker wants an attractive, pleasant home for her family, and she can have it even though she works outside the home. Family and neighborhood cooperation...planning of home work...and thoughtful use of time and energy can contribute to better home living, even in wartime.

